part because of influences from abroad. Its figures became more lifelike and showed more vigorous action. There arrived, too, the first waves of Buddhism—that faith which was to be the vehicle for more profound foreign influences on the Chinese than came from any other single source in historic times until almost out own day.

With the end of the Han, in the third century A.D., a period of political disunion began which lasted for not far from four centuries. During much of this time non-Chinese peoples from the North and West ruled great sections of the North. Numbers of families claimed imperial power, but no one of them was able to command the allegiance of so much of the country as had acknowledged the Han—although in the third century one nearly succeeded in doing so. Most of them ruled over what were only fragments of the former Han domains. Thanks in part to the weakening of the administrative system inherited from the Han and the consequent feebleness of its accompanying Confucian-ism, Buddhism made great headway and established itself as a major religion of the land. With it came new and varied art forms, some of them of Greek origin, and it inspired marked artistic and literary activity. By the end of the period the Chi-nese had begun to make Buddhism their own and to think it through in terms of their experience. The result was Buddhist sects which, while often claiming Indian nativity, usually displayed marks of their Chinese environment. Yet the older religious sys-tems—Confucianism and Taoism—did not disappear, even though both, especially Taoism, were profoundly modified by competition with their rival.

In spite of the nearly four centuries of division,

the dream of political unity for all the inheritors of Chinese culture did not die. At tile close of the sixth century it was once more realized by the Sui dynasty. The Sui was quickly followed by the T'ang. During the T'ang, which led China from early in the seventh to early in the tenth century A.D., the Empire reached a new level of power and prosperity, but with a culture which in some respects differed decidedly from that of its greatest predecessor, the Han. Like the Han it extended the geographical boundaries of the Empire toward the south and north, and especially toward the west. The outer limits of the two were not far from the same. Like the